

REMARKS

The present amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated December 19, 2002, which set a three-month period for response, making this amendment due by March 19, 2003.

Claims 9 through 17 are pending in this application.

In the Office Action, the specification was objected to for various informalities. The drawings were objected to as not including required labels, for failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) as not including reference signs mentioned in the specification, and under 37 CFR 1.83(a) as not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Claims 9 and 12 were objected to for various informalities. Claims 12 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 9-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Admitted Prior Art of Figure 1 (APA) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,483,426 to Lewis et al.

Turning first to the objections to the specification, the Applicants have amended the title, the disclosure, and the abstract to adopt the changes proposed by the Examiner. The abstract was further amended to delete all reference numerals.

Figure 1 has been amended to add the legend "Prior Art". With regard to the objection to the drawings as not showing reference numeral 23 on page 12 (in the abstract), as stated above, the abstract was amended to delete all reference numerals, including "23".

Regarding the objection to the drawings as not showing the feature of the "bevel gear container" recited in claim 11, in light of the amendment to claim 9, claim 11 has been canceled. Likewise, claim 15 has been canceled.

Concerning the objections to the claims and rejection of the claims under Section 112, the Applicants have amended claims 9, 12, and 17 to address each of the points raised on pages 3-4 of the Office Action.

Turning now to the substantive rejection of the claims, the Applicants have amended claim 9 to add the limitations of claim 10, which has been canceled. Amended claim 9 now provides that the element for moving the at least one bevel gear on the adjusting screw and pressing the at least one bevel gear on said adjusting screw against said other bevel gear is formed as a spring.

As the Examiner states on page 6 of the Office Action, the APA in view of Lewis does not teach the element 74 being formed as a spring. However, the Applicants respectfully disagree that it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the element 74 to provide a spring force.

If the practitioner were to combine the APA and Lewis, he or she would be provided with no suggestion or motivation to modify the element 74 to provide any spring force to the bevel gear 76. Rather, Lewis only teaches providing an element that is specifically designated as a "gear container" for moving the bevel gear and pressing it against the other bevel gear. Neither the APA nor Lewis expresses any disclosure or suggestion relating to an objective of reducing play in the system by preventing the teeth of the gears from slipping out of the mesh. Certainly, no disclosure or suggestion for "modifying", or more accurately,

substituting the gear container with a spring type element is provided in either the APA or in the Lewis patent. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully submit that the cited combination of the APA and Lewis reference would not and could not lead to the present invention, as defined in amended claim 9.

Further, the Applicants respectfully submit that the stated grounds for rejection constitutes an impermissible retrospective view of the references, in consideration of the claimed features of the present invention, since neither of the cited references discloses or suggests to the practitioner the modification suggested by the Examiner.

The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that claims 9, 12-14, and 16-17 are patentable over the cited reference combination. The Applicants further request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 and reconsideration of the claims as herein amended.

In light of the foregoing arguments in support of patentability, the Applicants respectfully submit that this application stands in condition for allowance. Action to this end is courteously solicited.

Should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to discuss appropriate claim language that will place the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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